



ICOMOS

ICAHM

**International Committee
on Archaeological
Heritage Management**

**Menorca Statement on the Development and Use of Best
Practices in the Management of
Archaeological World Heritage Sites**

The FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BEST PRACTICES IN WORLD HERITAGE: ARCHAEOLOGY met on the Island of Menorca, in Spain, 9 through 13 April 2012. The Conference was organized by the Complutense University of Madrid, and sponsored by the Council of Menorca Island (Balearic Islands, Spain), and held in coordination with the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management (ICAHM). This was the largest conference ever assembled for the express purpose of discussing archaeological heritage management.

The statement that follows is intended to point the way forward in archaeological heritage management as the remains of the past are increasingly challenged by a wide array of threats to their survival and proper stewardship. Many of these problems were discussed and described at the conference.

The key conclusion of the Menorca meeting was that the non-renewable archaeological patrimony at many sites inscribed on the World Heritage List is being destroyed at an alarming rate. The cause for this destruction ranges includes but is not limited to: industrial development, mining, excessive tourism pressure, agricultural development, renewal of historic town centers or urban expansion, and climate change. These problems are aggravated by inadequate management of archaeological sites, including lack knowledge about the heritage, lack of financial resources and insufficient numbers of adequately trained personnel.

The economic drive for tourism at World Heritage Sites emerged as the most obvious threat. These fascinating sites are now seen as primarily economic assets instead of repositories of information about the human past.

Moreover, we observed increasing national zeal around the world to inscribe archaeological sites on the World Heritage List. This push is too often happening before the capacity to manage and preserve those resources is in place.

In light of this multi-faceted situation, the following actions are proposed:

- ❖ Experts will work together to develop Best Practices for the Management of Archaeological World Heritage Sites. These guidelines, which began to be formulated in Menorca, Spain (April 9-13, 2012), are to be further discussed at the ICAHM Annual Conference in Cuzco, Peru November 27-30, 2012.
- ❖ Best Practices need to reflect not just technical and western ideals. They need to include social and ideological concerns and not all need to be universal. Instead, they need to be context dependent.
- ❖ Nomination of archaeological sites to the World Heritage List should expressly address these best practices as follows:
 - Nomination dossiers must establish beyond a doubt that best practices can be adhered to at the time of inscription; alternately
 - Nomination dossiers should include a detailed plan that will describe the means by which capacity to adhere to best practices will be developed.
 - ◆ The plan will include timeframes and cost.
 - ◆ The plan also should identify sources of funding required to establish capacity according to time frames.
 - ◆ If the nominating States Party is unable to identify sources of funding, the World Heritage Committee should be required to do so.

- ◆ If funding is unavailable to enact a satisfactory site management plan, inscription should be deferred until funding is identified and obtained.